

House Natural Resources Committee – 2011 Montana Legislature

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793-0028

Testimony on SB306 – OPPOSE

Honorable Chairman Hendrick and Members of the Committee,
My name is Steven Kloetzel, I live at 3270 Kleinschmidt Flat Rd in Ovando, where I am employed as a land manager.

Prior to moving to the Blackfoot Valley, I worked for 11 years as a reclamation contractor. During those years, I worked on many large open pit heap-leach mines around Montana, including the Kendall Mountain, Beal Mountain, Basin Creek and Zortman-Landusky Mine^s. I know first-hand the negative environmental impacts these mines cause.

These four large mines were or are owned by out-of-state or out-of-country corporations. All had inadequate bonds, and all have ongoing environmental contamination problems. Leaching cyanide is a problem at some, but acid mine drainage is perhaps even more egregious. Several of these mines, and others, require perpetual water treatment. Perpetual is a very long time...whereas some of these mines only contributed to Montana's economy for a few years.

Past mining cleanup is costing the people of Montana and U.S. taxpayers tens of millions of dollars. Our children and grandchildren will still be paying for what mining companies have done to Montana. That is why the people of Montana voted twice to stop new cyanide heap-leach mines, as recently as 7 years ago.

Open pit mines leave a legacy that we should not hand on to our children or grandchildren. Please oppose SB 306.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.